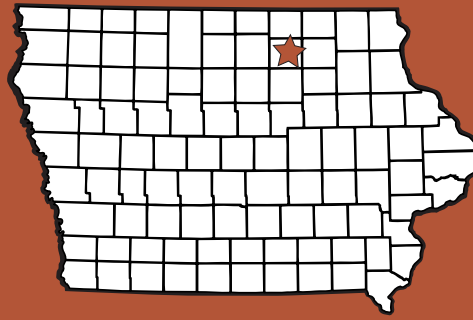




Jon Gisleson
Floyd, Iowa
Corn/Soybeans
800 Acres



Strip-Till

Producer Profile



United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

Eleven years after strip-tilling for the first time, Jon Gisleson is considered a veteran strip-tiller among his peers. He strip-tills in the fall into soybean stubble to prepare the seedbed for spring corn planting, and uses a no-till drill to plant soybeans into corn residue.

Land/Soil Type

Jon Gisleson row crops 800 acres on four farms in northern Floyd County. His land surface is level to gently rolling with long slopes. He farms in soils that belong to the Kenyon-Clyde-Floyd soil association, a group of loamy and silty soils that drain moderately well to poorly. Gisleson encounters drainage issues along the Cedar River.

Fertility Plan

Fall

Gisleson covers an estimated 30 acres with his 1,000-gallon tank applying a 4-13-10 liquid fertilizer solution seven inches into the strip. The solution provides him 14 lbs. of nitrogen, 42 lbs. of phosphorus and 34 lbs. of potassium (potash).

Spring

Gisleson applies nitrogen in June after the crop has emerged.

Soil Sampling

Gisleson takes soil samples in 10-acre grids. Before he began strip-tilling, he performed soil sampling every other year, but he recently cut back to every four years. "My time now is more compromised in the fall," he said.

He feels strongly about sampling his own fields. "I've always done my own sampling. I don't want somebody out there who doesn't know the ground," he said.

Strips

Gisleson no-tills annually into corn residue. It takes him about five days to strip-till his other 400 acres in the fall. He makes seven-inch deep strips soon after harvest. "For me, strip-till is for corn into soybean stubble," he said. "I go out and plant into the strips in the spring, sidedress in June, spray a couple times, and then I'm done (until harvest)."



Fall strip-till into bean stubble

Gisleson prefers fall strip-till over spring because the seedbed has time to settle. "It's easier for me to keep my planter in the strip," he said. "If the seedbed is too high, the planter can jump from side to side of the seedbed and miss that center-third of the strip, which is really important."

He says the center-third of the strip can also be missed if the person planting isn't the person who made the strips. "You need someone familiar with the ground," he said. "For example, you shouldn't plant in the opposite direction the strips were made. Then you're not mimicking what you did when you made the strip."



Gisleson makes 7-inch strips into soybean stubble.

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Equipment

Gisleson uses a Blue-Jet LandTracker multiple use implement caddy to pull a 1,000-gallon liquid fertilizer tank. Behind the caddy is a Remlinger Precision Strip Till (PST) 12-row, vertical-folding toolbar with 30-inch row spacing.

"It is important to get over the mindset that you have to use tillage equipment just because you have it," he said.

Economic Benefits

Strip-till saves Gisleson time and money, and reduces stress levels. Strip-till enables him to spend less time in the field, cutting fuel costs in half. Reduced time in the field also allows extra time for hobbies. "It gives me more time to go fishing and to ride my bicycle, and other things I like to do," he said.

Gisleson says he has learned to be patient with strip-till. "The management system is a little different," he said. "You can afford to be patient and wait until fields are fit because it takes half the time to complete the process compared to conventional tillage. It drops the stress level."

Performance/Yields

Compared to conventional tillage, Gisleson says his best fields perform about the same with strip-till, while his poorer fields yield better. "You are definitely not going to take a yield hit with strip-till," he said. "I am able to conserve moisture, and I have a better seedbed than I ever made before. And, I spend less money to put the crop in."

Challenges

Gisleson says corn producers like to see the corn plant come up in the row, and it's not as easy to see early on with strip-till, unless the plant is truly centered in the row.

"If you're crop-sharing or renting, it is a good idea to meet with your partner or landlord about strip-till," he said. "It is a different system than most are accustomed to."

Management Tips

No Starter Needed

With strip-till, there is no need to use a starter fertilizer on corn, according to Gisleson. "That's the advantage of having that concentration of phosphorus and potassium in the root zone," he said.

Be Patient

Gisleson says practicing patience is good advice for all producers, but especially with strip-till. With less passes in the field required, he says there is no need to get out in the field too early. "If you have your strips made in the fall, you will be able to get planting done easily in the spring," he says. "Make sure conditions are right for planting."

Contact Jon Gisleson

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